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ABSTRACT

Education needs to change to ensure individual success and survival as well as retain the United States' position in the world. Expectations must be raised for students, teachers, parents, school boards, administrators, and the public at large. Partnerships are essential among school boards, staffs, businesses, students, parents, communities, and human resource agencies. All partners must be held accountable for students learning a common core of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Students should be given individual growth plans and performance standards. Early developmental and latch key programs should be provided for families. Teachers should be carefully selected, regularly assessed, and rewarded or removed if evaluation and development fail to lead to successful goal completion. District boards and administrators should adopt policies that make clear and help achieve expected standards of performance. A common core of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that all students will be required to learn should be adopted by the state board and superintendent. The legislature should ask for student performance documentation and adequately fund endorsed standards. Partnerships should be made between businesses and schools to accomplish specific and mutual outcomes. Annual report cards should be given to the community, which makes its views known and assists in accomplishing school goals. (8 References) (EJS)

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Report to

State Board of Education/State Superintendent of Public Instruction

from

Education and Economics Task Force

GREATER EXPECTATIONS:

Raising Standards, Forming Partnerships, and Accounting for Student Learning

November, 1989

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Good schools affect the economy...the family...the country...the moral fabric of society..."

Good schools affect the economy by sending business and industry workers who are equipped; affect the family by producing better prepared parents; affect the country by producing informed citizens; affect the moral fabric of society by correcting conditions that make unhappy, unhealthy, irresponsible, unproductive adults and by producing people with the basic knowledge and skills to continue lifelong learning.

What was excellent education yesteryear is no longer adequate. Education needs to change because the world has changed and students must have different knowledge and greater skills in order to ensure individual success and survival, as well as to retain America's position in the world.

Three conclusions:

The task force reached three conclusions:

"...expectations must be raised..."

First, that expectations must be raised for students, teachers, parents, school boards, and administrators and the public at large.

"...partnerships are essential..."

Second, that because no single segment of society can be held responsible for student performance, partnerships are essential among and between school boards and individual school staffs, teachers and parents, school and business, school boards and communities, parents and students, schools and other human service agencies.

"...all partners be held accountable..."

Finally, that all partners be held accountable for students learning a common core of knowledge and acquiring a common core of skills and attitudes.

From these conclusions, the task force makes four recommendations relating to students; four recommendations

relating to parents; seven recommendations to teachers; 10 recommendations to district boards; and three recommendations to the State Board and State Superintendent including the adoption of curriculum and instruction that produce a common core of knowledge, skills and attitudes in Wyoming high school graduates.

Finally, the task force makes one recommendation to the governor, three recommendations to the legislature, three to business and industry and one to the community.

Highlights from the recommendations follow:

"Students should be given individual growth plans..."

Students should be given individual growth plans and performance standards and should be kept in school (or alternative programs) until they master these standards.

Families should be provided early developmental and latch key programs, and assistance in improving their skills as parents and teachers. Parents should be required to sign contracts with the schools, confirming their commitment to helping their children achieve their potential.

"Teachers should be carefully selected, thoroughly prepared, regularly assessed and appropriately rewarded..."

Teachers should be carefully selected, thoroughly prepared, regularly assessed and appropriately rewarded, or removed if evaluation and development fail to lead to successful completion of goals.

District Boards and Administrators should make clear what standards of performance are expected and adopt policies that enable students and teachers to achieve the standards.

The State Board and the State Superintendent should adopt a common core of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that all students will be required to learn.

The Legislature should confirm or redirect the State Board's and the State Superintendent's expectations, ask for documentation of students' performance, and adequately fund and reward the performance they have endorsed.

"Business and industry should make their needs known..."

Business and Industry should make their needs known, participate in partnerships to accomplish specific and mutual outcomes, allocate resources to support those outcomes, and be involved in local schools, colleges and universities.

The Community should receive annual report cards from the schools, make their views known, and assist in setting and accomplishing academic goals for the public schools.

GREATER EXPECTATIONS:

Raising Standards, Forming Partnerships, and Accounting for Student Learning

November, 1989

INTRODUCTION

The Education and Economics Task Force was established by the State Board of Education in December 1988 at the request of the State Superintendent to respond to the fundamental question: **WHAT DO OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES NEED TO KNOW AND WHAT SKILLS SHOULD THEY HAVE TO SUCCEED IN A RADICALLY ALTERED WORLD ECONOMY?**

"...students should be viewed as the human resources...that would save our form of self government, revive the family and recapture the values this nation was built upon."

The task force took an holistic approach to its charge. That is, the members agreed that students and schooling were not economic tools to fix Wyoming's economy or to make Wyomingites or Americans in general more competitive in a world market, but that students should be viewed as the human resources that would not only retrieve America's place in a highly competitive world economy, but as the resources that would save our form of self-government, revive the family, and recapture the values this nation was built upon.

The demand of work today is for employees who are lifelong learners. National statistics indicate that the average employee will change jobs four times in a lifetime and that every job that now exists will be obsolete by the year 2000.

As a consequence, employers require flexible, adaptable, thoughtful, creative workers. The era when a person with very little education could learn one repetitive act on an assembly line and make a good living is over. The demand for a broad-based education is linked to this reality and places particular pressure on institutions to respond.

The attitudes about work, the family, self-government, ethical behavior, and cooperative activity are learned most effectively early in life. With the change in the family, the change in the population, the change in the economy, the

rise of technology, and resulting demands for a highly skilled work force, the role of the school must change. It can no longer be solely an educational institution.

In order for all children to have an equal opportunity to achieve their highest potential, the school must recognize and deal with social, economic and psychological handicaps that make some children more at risk than others.

"Lifelong learning skills must be nurtured..."

Lifelong learning skills must be nurtured in the home, developed in the schools, and supported by business and the community. If students learn how to learn, attain basic communication and math skills, and acquire skills and attitudes that help them think, solve problems, adapt to changing circumstances and continue to learn, they will help improve the economy, strengthen the U.S. position in the world, become involved, informed, active citizens, reliable workers and responsible parents, friends and neighbors.

In keeping with this vision, employers no longer seek and support the kind of potpourri of elective courses or entry-level job skill courses it did a few short years ago. The private sector now seeks a more literate person capable of making vital contributions to the job and the society in which he lives.

"The private sector seeks people with sound and discriminating judgment..."

The private sector seeks people with sound and discriminating judgment, for individuals who are thoughtful about the jobs they are doing, who are sensitive to the people they work with, who are practiced at working with others to solve problems, who are concerned for the well being of the client for whom they supply goods or services, and who are cognizant of the people for whom they work and the pressures under which they labor in a competitive world economy.

Is it any wonder, then, that Denver businessmen polled in 1989 said they thought it important that their employees possess basic skills, but that anyone limited to those skills would not be considered for promotion? Analytical thinking, communication, and computational faculties rank much higher than mundane job skills.

Not that those basic skills are to be undervalued. Rather, the business community views them as minimal requirements to minimal paying jobs without a future if the individual who possesses them is not also capable of reflection, analytic thought, ethical judgment, and mental breadth.

"Basic skills are no longer sufficient..."

Basic skills are no longer sufficient for the simple reason that they are not focused on knowledge, habits of character, personality disposition, ethical values, sensitivity to others, flexibility, creativity, responsibility and several other components which make for a successful adulthood.

It is to education that business turns, for it is now clear to the private sector that the consequences of inadequate education have deeply affected its ability to respond to a global economy. Sixty-two percent (62%) of America's largest companies have already experienced difficulties in hiring employees with good basic education skills. These companies believe that this problem has affected their company's productivity and competitiveness.

Corporate executives anticipate increased need for some post-secondary education in their workforce, specifically, that 45% of their employees will require some post-secondary education in the next decade. These executives also believe that though there will be a growth in the workforce by 28% in the next decade, there will be a shortage of personnel qualified to fill the positions most vital to their competitiveness.

"The question...is...how schooling should enable students to live...as workers and citizens in a global economy."

The question, then, is not how schools should contribute to economic development, but how schooling should enable students to live productively and constructively as worker and citizens in a global economy.

The National and Regional Educational Picture

It is the purpose of this report to suggest the ways in which basic skills **and** the higher skills associated with a discriminating mind can be achieved through schooling to the benefit of the individual and of the private sector which depends on the individual for productivity. Before turning to ideas for changes, it is important to set the broad social context in which these suggestions are made.

As the schools need to adapt to a changing world, so do they need to adapt to a changing school population. Many of the roles formerly assumed by church and family have now been assigned to schools. Schools have an expanded role as social tools at the same time as they need to change the method and substance of schooling.

The task force recognizes these dual pressures. Because there are indications that Wyoming school students are high

achievers on a comparative basis nationally, and because Wyoming's student population hasn't changed as much as in other states, Wyoming has the opportunity to change rapidly to meet the needs of the student, the economy and society.

Nowhere is it more dramatically advanced than in the national statistics concerning those who currently possess only the most limited basic skills. This group includes:

68% of all those arrested
85% of unwed mothers
79% of welfare dependents
85% of the high school dropouts
72% of the unemployed

These are individuals at risk caught in a never-ending round of poverty, ignorance, and limited opportunity. But, when we compare these statistics against the picture in the state of Wyoming, we find a better social situation than in urban and suburban America. Wyoming's high school completion rate, for example, is one of the highest in the nation.

"Wyoming's per capita dollar output for education is one of the highest in the nation."

Wyoming's per capita dollar output for education is one the highest in the nation. And the state boasts a public willing to continue funding education if those funds can be directly linked to student results.

Additionally, the state's school children number only 98,000, and its teacher workforce 7,000 to 7,500, a ratio which makes possible individual attention and the thesis that **if one state in the nation can tackle the problem of education and economy for the 21st century, it is Wyoming.**

The world is currently perceived as a huge industrial, technological workplace for which schools are ill-prepared to develop their students' potentials. The reason for this may lie in the fact that most of our educational models are based on turn-of-the-century industrial notions, including **three outmoded ideas:**

- a high school diploma is the terminal degree for half the graduating seniors;
- graduating seniors must therefore be prepared in high school to enter the workforce through vocational training;
- if vocational education courses are not offered as **alternatives** to core academic curricula, these students drop out.

These assumptions are no longer valid, not on a national scale, nor in Wyoming.

"Small business employers account for over half the jobs in Wyoming..."

Small business employers (with fewer than 500 employees) account for over half the jobs in Wyoming and more than 40% of the jobs being created today. These are no longer assembly-line jobs requiring specialization.

Small businesses tend to give employees broad assignments and responsibilities, requiring of them flexibility, common sense, and analytical thinking skills. Lack of specialization makes both employees and employers flexible and provides generalized learning experience that aids in career transitions later in life.

Rather than persist in thinking our high school graduates require job training within narrow definitions, we must change our ideas to fit a global economy and recognize that vocational education which is separated from general education does not strengthen the economy. In fact, it may weaken the economy in the sense that we are not graduating students with the skills and knowledge they need for the future awaiting them.

"If hands-on education is needed today, it is in the areas of math, science, reading, writing and second language acquisition."

If a hands-on education is needed today, it is in the areas of math, science, history, reading, writing, and second language acquisition.

Since employers provide 69% of the formal training employees require to perform their tasks on the job, they do not expect them to be specifically trained in high school. What they expect today is radically different—graduates who are broadly educated, who have basic skills and a foundation of knowledge from which to build a personally meaningful and economically productive life.

The private sector not only expects, but is vocally demanding that the school systems produce an intelligent workforce of all its students, advantaged or disadvantaged. In order to achieve this goal, all students must be educated broadly within the context of a new economic order.

A Changing Population

"The school population has been altered radically in the past decade..."

The school population has been altered radically in the past decade, to such an extent that the schools are being challenged to meet needs that it could not have imagined 10 years ago. Twenty-seven states, for example, now require economics education for graduation.

From a national perspective, the Fortune 500 company executives put more faith in solutions such as getting parents involved in education, improving study habits and discipline, making teachers more accountable, raising academic standards, and lengthening the school year than they do in decreasing class ratios, involving teachers in governance, parental choice, or longer school days. This indicates a radical shift in relations between the educational and private sectors, with the latter becoming more demanding and more involved in educational decisions.

The task force believes that educators in partnership with parents and business must pave the way to the future of education and the goals of lifelong learning.

"Educators must take into account that by the year 2000 nationwide, 77.4% of the industries will be in the service producing business..."

Educators must take into account that by the year 2000 nationwide, 77.4% of industry will be in the service producing business where assembly-line training is not appropriate; 22.6% will be in goods producing, placing demands on an intelligent and competent workforce. Goods producing will decrease 1%; service producing industry will increase 27%. Jobs requiring repetitive procedures, little problem-solving, and less decision-making will be in low demand.

Additionally, educators must take into account that the fastest growing sector of the workforce is Hispanic (74% growth), and Anglo (15%). A broad general education will equip each population group adequately to deal with the global economy; training in highly specialized production geared to one aspect of the assembly line will do each population group a disservice.

Annually, almost 14% of the workforce is in need of retraining for which a general education geared to lifelong learning is the most adequate preparation. The demands for lifelong learning grow when considering, too, that 80% of the jobs are in small businesses which have the highest need for broadly-trained employees.

"America's ability to shape the course of the 21st century will depend not only on the productivity of its workforce but on the creativity of its average citizens."

America's ability to shape the course of the 21st century will depend not only on the productivity of its workforce, but on the creativity of its average citizens. According to the Committee on Workforce Quality, "competitive advantage has replaced military might as the principal source of global influence..."

To secure this competitive advantage, the Committee makes the following recommendations on how to achieve the goal

of producing high school students who are in the process of becoming lifelong learners.

Partnerships must be forged between traditionally separate sectors of the community and flexibility to experiment with school's schedules, structures, and curricula are necessary. Teacher training and instruction must improve. And, if they are to be skilled workers and conscientious citizens, high school students must prepare for college even if they do not feel they will enter post-secondary education upon graduation.

The statistics show that those who do not continue in post-secondary education immediately following graduation from public school do return within a decade for retraining and retooling for an economy whose demands on them they could not foresee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The task force recommends that **three changes** be made to improve student learning outcomes in Wyoming.

- **Expectations must be raised for and by students, teachers and administrators, parents, school boards, business and industry, the community at large, the State Board, State Department of Education and the State Legislature.**
- **Partnerships between and among various individuals, agencies and institutions should be required.**
- **Each partner in the educational enterprise should be held accountable for students' learning a common core of knowledge and acquiring a common core of skills and attitudes.**

The task force believes the following actions will enable all partners to accomplish the goals outlined in these three recommendations.

Students

"Students should be kept in school until they master their performance standards..."

- Students should be kept in school until they master their performance standards, or alternatives to seat-site time within the school should be worked out with colleges, private enterprise, or within the district.
- Students should have individual growth plans or performance expectations which are determined by the teacher, principal/counselor, parent and student himself.
- Students should be assessed periodically and provided assistance to improve in areas of low performance.
- Students should be given differentiated diplomas which indicate their level of achievement.

Families

- Families should be provided early childhood development programs by or though the schools.
- Working families should be provided latch key programs for their children before and after school.

"Parents or guardians should be required to make a commitment to sharing the educational responsibility with the schools..."

"Teachers should be selected from among the best and the brightest."

- Families should be provided assistance in improving parenting skills, helping children with their studies, family nutrition and other services that strengthen the family.
- Though this assistance may not be provided directly by the school staff, it is recommended that the school-site staff be responsible for forming cooperative partnerships with other social and educational agencies and utilizing the school building to the maximum.
- Parents or guardians should be expected to make a commitment to sharing the educational responsibility with the schools by signing contracts with the school in which all parties, including the teacher, principal, parents, and students, commit themselves to the performance objectives agreed upon.

Teachers

- Teachers should be selected from among the best and the brightest.
- Teachers should be evaluated periodically and systematically on the basis of prior expectations agreed upon by parents, students, teachers, and administrators.
- Teachers' continuing education and professional development should be based upon their evaluations and should be jointly agreed upon by supervisor and teacher.
- Teachers should be rewarded, in part, for the successful completion of the expectations outlined and removed when expectations are not met.
- Teachers should be able to advance in salary as high as administrators without becoming administrators by demonstrating their skills and knowledge in a manner that confirms their performance and competence.
- Teachers should be certified for their skills and knowledge rather than the number of hours they have spent in preparation.
- Teachers should be broadly educated so they can consistently reinforce other disciplines.

District Boards

- Districts should require board training for all board members which consists of the latest research in education as well as best management practices.

"Boards should adopt a common core of knowledge that all children are to acquire by graduation."

- Boards should involve business and industry in educational partnerships, especially related to helping students develop work skills, but also in identifying whether the students are graduating with the skills needed and in identifying the kind of skills or knowledge needed.
- Boards should seek input and report their performance goals to the community, how well they have been achieved, and what steps they will take to correct deficiencies.
- Boards should encourage site-based management and help prepare teachers, parents, and school administrators to assume management responsibilities.
- Boards should enable school staffs and the public to restructure the use of the schools, the school calendar, the curriculum and programs, the staffing and hold them responsible for student performance results.
- Boards should adopt a common core of knowledge that all children are to acquire by graduation. Curricular offerings should be justified on the basis of meeting the common core of knowledge and local needs based on demographic considerations including social and economic needs.
- Boards should make clear what common values or attitudes are to be encouraged and reinforced. This common core of values should include individual responsibility and self reliance, flexibility, a work ethic, integrity, interpersonal ethics, motivation, persistance, curiosity, lifelong learning, adaptability, and constructive use of leisure time.
- Districts should make clear that certain skills will be required before diplomas are awarded including problem solving, keyboarding, communications and interpersonal relations, analytical thinking and ability to find answers, life or practical skills such as job seeking, parenting, homekeeping, and entrepreneurship (or creating new jobs for self and/or others).
- Boards should regularly evaluate the superintendent, and the superintendent should regularly evaluate all administrative personnel. Central to the evaluation should be the student outcome goals agreed upon at the district and school levels.
- Boards should form or cause to be formed partnerships with the community and the schools to accomplish all of the above.

"The State Board and State Superintendent should make clear their expectations for the districts..."

State Board and State Superintendent

- The State Board and State Superintendent should make clear their expectations for the districts and the manner in which they will measure whether the expectations have been met. These expectations should be student centered and revolve around physical facilities, administration and management, curriculum and instruction, equal access to the program as well as facilities, special services to students which enable them to achieve their fullest potential.
- The State Board and State Superintendent should require that partnerships be required in the adoption of all standards at the state level and in the adoption and measurement of all expectations at the local level.
- The State Board and Superintendent should require that all students acquire the following skills, attitudes and knowledge:

Common Core of Knowledge

Common Core of Knowledge

- citizenship/government
- health/hygiene/sex education
- economics/capitalism/entrepreneurship
- the humanities/fine arts
- sciences
- global cultures/geography/economics/politics
- history/social sciences
- math/computation
- understanding technology
- career options

Common Skills

Common Core of Skills

- constructive use of leisure time
- problem solving
- keyboarding and computer skills
- listening, reading, writing, speaking and interpersonal skills
- ability to find answers, think critically
- entrepreneurship
- practical "life" skills
- job seeking and work skills
- adaptability
- creativity

Common Attitudes

Common Core of Attitudes

- sense of responsibility
- flexibility
- work ethic
- personal integrity
- moral values
- interpersonal ethics
- positive self concept
- respect for others
- motivation/persistence
- curiosity, lifelong learning

Governor

- The governor should positively promote and support excellence in education.

The Legislature

"The Legislature should make clear what documentation is acceptable that students have achieved...expectations..."

- The Legislature should make clear what documentation is acceptable that students have achieved the expectations outlined by the State Department and State Superintendent, local district board/superintendent, principal/teacher/student.
- The Legislature should allocate resources to the districts to accomplish the expectations which it mandated.
- The Legislature should provide awards and recognition to districts, schools, and individuals who exceed expectations and more resources to those districts that need additional personnel, programs, or partnerships if they have documentation that they need more assistance in order to meet expectations.

Business and Industry

"Business and industry should make their needs known..."

- Business and industry should make their needs known and form partnerships to help schools and other educational institutions accomplish specific outcomes which have been identified by mutual agreement.
- Business and industry should allocate resources to support the outcomes they seek.
- Business and industry should be involved in local schools, colleges and universities.

The Community

"The community should demand annual report cards from the school..."

- The community should demand annual report cards from the school and should attend school board meetings and budget hearings and make suggestions about the operation and outcomes of the schools.

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